

FLORIDA FOLKLIFE DIGITIZATION AND EDUCATION PROJECT

Grant Award LG-03-03-0052-03

October 2003 – September 2005

FINAL REPORT

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The State Archives of Florida's *Florida Folklife Digitization and Education Project* was a two year IMLS funded project intended to enhance access to the Florida Folklife Collection, to develop educational resources based on the Collection, and to make these cultural and educational resources accessible to lifelong learners on the Florida Memory Project Web site at <http://www.floridamemory.com>.

The Florida Folklife Collection is a rich archival collection documenting the folk arts, crafts, customs, lore, games, music, and dance of many of Florida's cultural communities. These communities are representative of sister communities across the country sharing the same national, ethnic, religious, and cultural traditions. The collection also documents the administration and presentation of the Florida Folk Festival, the nation's oldest continuous folk festival. In addition, it traces the development of the folklife field, including the work of some of the nation's most prominent folklorists and one of the country's earliest state folklife programs.

The *Florida Folklife Digitization and Education Project's* goals were achieved through three major project activities:

1. Creating an index to provide item-level access to approximately 50,000 photographic images and approximately 5,000 audio recordings
2. Creating catalog records and digital images of 10,000 of the most significant and representative indexed images
3. Creating four educational units using digitized materials from the Folklife Collection

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The completed project has resulted in increased access to a substantial portion of the Florida Folklife Collection; online access to over 10,000 photographs; online information and educational resources for students and educators; and preservation of original documents and photographic imagery through reduced handling. The status of each of the grant objectives is as follows:

Goal #1: Create an index providing item-level access to approximately 50,000 photographic images and approximately 5,000 audio recordings.

Accomplishment: Created an index providing item-level access to 45,952 photographic images and 5,537 audio recordings.*

** Before the project began, Archives staff estimated the size and extent of the collection. Upon completion, with duplications, missing items, and misnumbered materials taken into account, there were fewer images than originally estimated in the grant proposal. However, sound recordings exceeded the estimated numbers listed in the grant proposal.*

In September 2003, a full-time archivist was hired to index the selected items, and in February 2004, a vendor was hired to develop a database for the index, including both a data entry interface and a staff and public search interface. Requirements for the database included:

- Data elements compatible with Dublin Core metadata standards
- Use of standardized vocabularies, including both Library of Congress Subject Headings and Name Authorities and professionally-accepted folklife vocabularies
- Powerful, flexible search capabilities

Project staff met regularly with the State Folklorist and the database consultant in creating the database. A series of refinements and enhancements to the original design resulted in a complete, fully functional, easy-to-use data entry and searchable interface. The indexing describes a variety of characteristics of the selected items, among them the item type (still image, moving image, sound, text/manuscript), item title, date, program/event, collector/fieldworker, tradition bearer, ethnicity/nationality, genre/occupation, subject, and place. The Folklife Database can be found on the Florida Memory site at <http://www.floridamemory.com/Collections/folklife/>.

As stated in the grant proposal, the archivist worked on Series 1576, *Audio Recordings of Florida Folk Festival Performances and Other Folk Events*, and Series 1577, *Photographs and Slides of Folk Arts, Artisans, and Performers*. These two series contain the bulk of the Folklife Collection's photographic and audio materials, and represent the largest and most highly used series in the collection. A number of other smaller series within the collection were also entered into the database.

In addition to creating a detailed finding aid for researchers, indexing the Folklife Collection enabled staff to:

- Provide an item-level inventory to the majority of the Folklife Collection
- Identify any damaged and deteriorating sound recordings
- Identify which items were duplicated, missing, misidentified, or mislabeled
- Acquire a more holistic view of the collection, allowing for the creation of better overall descriptions
- Easily search the photographs and sound recordings for use in creating CDs, postcards, and other promotional and Web materials
- Better identify connections between items, and sometimes the relationship between the various series within the Folklife Collection

Goal #2: Create catalog records and digital images of 10,000 of the most significant and representative indexed images.

Accomplishment: Over 10,000 images from the Folklife Collection have been digitized and cataloged, and are available on the Florida Memory Web site at <http://www.floridamemory.com/Collections/folklife/>.

The images consist of negatives, photographs, and slides (both black and white and color), produced or collected by the Bureau of Florida Folklife Programs and the Florida Folklife Archive. They depict folklife festivals and events such as the annual Florida Folklife Festival; artisans and craftsmen such as quilters, carvers, and weavers, and their work; performances of folk dancers and musicians; educational and cultural programs sponsored by the Bureau of Florida Folklife Programs; various ethnic groups and their art, including the Seminole Indians; persons employed in traditional Florida industries such as shrimping and turpentine; and Florida architecture.

Goal #3: Create four educational units using digitized materials from the Folklife Collection.

Accomplishment: Five folklife educational units, all correlated to Florida's Sunshine State Standards (<http://www.firn.edu/doe/curric/prek12/frame2.htm>), were created and made available via the Online Classroom of the Florida Memory Web site at <http://www.floridamemory.com/Collections/folklife/>.

The learning units are as follows:

1. [Zora Neale Hurston, the WPA in Florida, and the Cross City Turpentine Camp](#) Zora Neale Hurston was already a published writer when she began working for the Florida division of the Work Projects Administration (WPA). In August of 1939, Hurston went on a recording expedition to the turpentine camps in Cross City, Florida. Includes photos and lesson plans.
2. [Netmaking and Net Fishing in Florida](#) Longtime net maker and Fernandina resident Billy Burbank III discusses the history and practices of the netmaking trade. Includes photos and lesson plans.
3. [Lucreaty Clark, White Oak Basket Maker](#) Clark learned to make white oak baskets from her parents. Originally, these sturdy baskets were used to hold cotton and carry vegetables. The tradition of white oak basket making has been carried on by Lucreaty Clark's grandson, Alphonso Jennings.
4. [Seminole Doll Making](#) Seminole doll maker Mary B. Billie and her daughter, Claudia C. John, discuss the history and practices of Seminole doll making. Includes photos and lesson plans.

5. [Sacred Harp](#) Documents and audio recordings in this unit are primarily drawn from *The Sacred Harp Sing*, a slide and tape show created by the Florida Folklife Program in 1978, and field recordings by Alton Morris in 1949 in Gainesville, Florida. Includes photos and lesson plans.

Additional Accomplishments

- Two promotional CDs produced (Enclosed)
Music from the Florida Folklife Collection
More Music from the Florida Folklife Collection
- A series of promotional postcards produced (Enclosed)
- Creation of an audio Web page with MP3s of both CDs, individual listings from each CD, and additional audio clips culled from the collection, including music, storytelling, and interviews
<http://www.floridamemory.com/Collections/folklife/audio.cfm>
- Creation of a Web page featuring biographies of many of Florida's (and the nation's) prominent folklorists who helped create the Collection
<http://www.floridamemory.com/Collections/folklife/folklorists.cfm>
- Five folklife-related film clips digitized and added to the Online Classroom Web site
http://www.floridamemory.com/PhotographicCollection/VideoFilm2/index_thumbnails.cfm
- An extensive "related links" page created, listing state and national Folklife organizations, and added to the Folklife Project Web site
<http://www.floridamemory.com/Collections/folklife/links.cfm>

PROJECT CHALLENGES

Unquestionably, one of the most difficult aspects of the project was reconciling the access needs of professional folklorists with traditional cataloging rules and practices. While Library of Congress authorities comprise our primary standard indexing vocabulary, LC terms often do not provide the level of specificity needed to access particular crafts, skills, etc., reflected in the Folklife Collection, or are defined differently than the same terms would be defined by the professional folklore community. After a series of meetings among project staff and Florida Folklife Program staff, and a period of experimentation with different vocabularies and levels of indexing, it was determined that access could be most effectively provided through use of terms at various levels of specificity. These vocabularies include LC, Art and Architecture Thesaurus, and the prototype Ethnographic Thesaurus being developed through a partnership between the American Folklife Center and the American Folklore Society.

There was also a two month delay in cataloging photographic images. The State Library and Archives transitioned from its DRAWeb2 Library Management System to a SIRSI System. For over eight weeks, no cataloging data could be entered; this was followed by another delay as staff was trained and the new system was fine tuned.

Another challenge involved the issue of ensuring that the database and its descriptions were accessible and useful to the diverse patronage of the Archives and the Folklife Collection, which includes historians, folklorists, students, genealogists, artists, musicians, anthropologists, and the general public. Therefore, effort was made to match the items to all reasonable possible users in both the written descriptions and the search terms utilized.

PROMOTION AND OUTREACH

December 2004

Middle and high school educators from the Panhandle Area Educational Consortium took part in the *Oral History* workshop funded by a U.S. Department of Education Teaching American History grant that PAEC received. This workshop, which was presented by the Museum and Archives staff, included a demonstration of the resources available on the Florida Memory Project Web page, focusing on the audio material from the Florida Folklife Collection.

January 2005

WFSU Television produced a three-minute segment featuring the State Archives Film and Audio Projects. The feature included sounds and moving images digitized during this project. It aired on public broadcast stations throughout the state several times in January.

Channel 27 News conducted interviews with staff for a Black History Month segment; in addition to answering general questions about the State Archives, staff discussed the ongoing *Florida Folklife Digitization and Education Project*.

Staff contacted folklorists Tina Bucuvalas, Leo Falcon, Peggy Bulger, Ormond Loomis, and David Taylor, requesting feedback on the developing Folklife Collection Web Page. This resulted in the creation of a Florida Folklorists' page, which features images and biographies of prominent past and present folklorists.

A series of press releases and articles detailing the project were initiated and continued throughout the project. They were sent to archival, historical, and library organizations. The news items described the *Florida Folklife Digitization and Education Project*, reported progress at each stage, and proved to be an excellent tool for informing colleagues about the ongoing project. (Attachment)

February 2005

Sixteen folklife sound recordings were downloaded to a new iPod Shuffle (the purchase made by Florida's State Librarian Judith Ring was facilitated by the president of Apple Computer, Inc., as the Shuffle was not widely available at this time). The iPod, along with a flier listing artists, titles, dates, and a description of the ongoing IMLS funded *Florida Folklife Digitization and Education Project*, was then personally presented to Governor Jeb Bush by State Librarian Ring. (Attachment)

Over 300 letters detailing the State Archives of Florida's *Florida Folklife Digitization and Education Project* were mailed out to various folklife and historical organizations. (Attachment)

Staff invited Florida Folk Festival Director Wendy Welch to the State Archives for a personal overview of the *Florida Folklife Digitization and Education Project*.

March 2005

Over 400 Folklife CDs and postcards were distributed and the Folklife Collection Web page was demonstrated at the 44th Annual Meeting of the ***Florida Conference of Historians*** in Tampa.

Approximately 100 Folklife CDs and postcards were handed out at the annual ***Southeastern Archives and Records Conference*** in Nashville, Tennessee.

April 2005

State Library and Archives staff demonstrated the Florida Memory Web site and gave out over 400 Folklife CDs and postcards at the annual ***Florida Heritage Book Festival***, which showcased Florida authors and writings, bringing in folk artists and performers from all over the state.

The State Library and Archives' Folklife Team met with, shared ideas with, and asked for input from Peggy Bulger, Director of Library of Congress' American Folklife Center. Dr. Bulger served as Florida's State Folklorist and administrator of the Florida Folklife Program from 1976 to 1989.

Staff gave an overview of the *Florida Folklife Digitization and Education Project* and handed out about 20 Folklife CDs at the ***Joint Meeting of the Florida Arts Council, Florida Historical Society, and Florida Folklife Council***.

Approximately 1,000 CDs and postcards were distributed at the annual ***Florida Library Association Meeting*** in Jacksonville.

May 2005

The Project Director attended the annual ***Southeastern Library Network Meeting*** in Atlanta, giving a presentation on the *Florida Folklife Digitization and Education Project*, which won the SOLINET Outstanding Library Award for digitization and electronic records. Over 400 Folklife CDs and postcards were also handed out during the SOLINET vendor exhibit.

A State Library and Archives booth was staffed, postcards and over 400 CDs were distributed, and the *Florida Folklife Digitization and Education Project* was demonstrated at the ***Florida Historical Society*** annual meeting in Palm Beach, Florida.

Project staff attended the ***Florida Folk Festival***, a statewide event held at the Stephen Foster Folk Culture Center State Park in White Springs that celebrates Florida's diverse cultures and folk arts. Attracting folk artists and performers from across Florida and the

nation, the average three-day attendance is between 40,000 and 50,000. This was the first time the State Archives of Florida participated in the Florida Folk Festival, and it was done via an exhibit booth that showcased the *Florida Folklife Digitization and Education Project*. A featured sample of the earliest known recording of the Florida Folk Festival, recorded on May 6, 1954, was also available for visitors to listen to. The public response was overwhelmingly positive, not only for the free materials, but also for the goal of the project, and the very existence of the Collection (most were not aware that the Archives housed the extensive Folklife Collection). The Will McLean Foundation, the Florida Folklore Society, and the Friends of Florida Folk assisted with passing out copies of the Folklife CDs. Over the three days, Archives staff passed out postcards and 4,000 CDs, and demonstrated the Florida Folklife Web site. Visitors included performer Dale Crider, former festival organizer Barbara Beauchamp, park manager Barbara Roberts, members of the Florida Folklore Society and Friends of Florida Folk, State Librarian Judith Ring, and thousands of interested people.

Approximately 100 Folklife CDs and postcards were distributed and the *Florida Folklife Digitization and Education Project* was demonstrated at the ***Open Books Open Minds, 2005 Florida Literacy Conference*** in Orlando, Florida.

June 2005

The State Library and Archives' *Florida Folklife Digitization and Education Project* was featured on a number of prominent Web sites:

- The American Folklife Society
<http://www.afsnet.org/sections/education/Spring2005/Hansen.html>
- American Library Association
<http://www.ala.org/ala/acrlbucket/candrlnews/internetreviews/200504/floridamemoryproject.htm>
- The American Folklife Center
http://www.loc.gov/folklife/teachers/country_list.php?countryID=41
- Smithsonian Institute
http://www.sil.si.edu/SILPublications/Online-Exhibitions/CF/oe_search3.cfm
- Institute of Museum and Library Services
<http://imlsdcc.grainger.uiuc.edu/collections/GemProject.asp?pid=2732>
- Sunlink
<http://sunlinkannouncements.blogspot.com/2005/04/and-award-goes-to.html>
- Council of State Historical Records Coordinators (COSHRC)
http://www.coshrc.org/arc/education/primsources_states.htm

July 2005

The 2005 *Special Edition* of *Florida Libraries: the Official Journal of the Florida Library Association* featured an article on the State Archives' Florida Photographic Collection. The article, written by Florida State University librarian Gloria Colvin, gives an excellent history of the Photographic Collection and Florida Memory Project, specifically mentioning the *Florida Folklife Digitization and Education Project*.

Approximately 25 Folklife CDs were distributed at the *College Center for Library Automation Meeting* in Tallahassee, resulting in a request by Linda McCarthy, Assistant Director for Library Services with CCLA, for 200 CDs that she could distribute statewide to the community college system libraries. (Attachment)

Eighty CDs and Postcards were distributed at the State Library and Archives' *Sunshine State Library Leadership Institute Meeting* in Tallahassee.

August 2005

Fifty Folklife CDs were distributed at the *Florida Library Network Council's Digital Collections Working Group Meeting* in Orlando.

The Institute of Museum and Library Services announced plans to feature the State Library and Archives' *Florida Folklife Digitization and Education Project* as a "Success Story" on the IMLS Web site.

One hundred copies of each Folklife CD were distributed at the *2005 Just Read, Florida! K-12 Leadership Conference* in Orlando.

September 2005

WVFS, a student operated radio station at Florida State University, added the two Folklife CDs, *Music from the Florida Folklife Collection* and *More Music from the Florida Folklife Collection*, to their program rotation. In addition, these two discs have been added as featured recordings on WVFS's *Legacies* program, a radio show that focuses on Folk and traditional music.

The fall 2005 magazine issue of *Florida History and the Arts* ran a short piece on the State Library and Archives' *Florida Folklife Digitization and Education Project*, mentioning the promotional CDs; as a result, requests for copies of the CDs poured in from all over the country. (Attachment)

WFMU, an independent freeform radio station broadcasting at 91.1 FM in the New York City area, and at 90.1 FM in the Hudson Valley, requested copies of each of the Folklife CDs to add to their regular program rotation. WFMU also provided a link to the Florida Folklife Collection Web page from their Web site, <http://www.wfmu.org>.

About 30 Folklife CDs and postcards were distributed at the *Florida Association of Counties' Meeting* in Tallahassee.

PROJECT EVALUATION

The *Florida Folklife Digitization and Education Project* has increased awareness and usage of the collection, which is open and free for all to use. To date, over 8,000 Folklife CDs and 15,000 postcards have been distributed. There have been over 500 individual written requests for the Folklife CDs, many from libraries.

In its first five months, the Florida Folklife Collection Web page received an average of 500 visitors a month (with over 400 monthly downloads of the CD). The site ranks high on the Google search engine and has been linked to by several library, folklife, and music-related Web pages.

In addition, the increased intellectual control and improved arrangement of the collection has streamlined patron service by easing the labor and time burdens on the Archives Reference staff. By housing the databases online, the project enables researchers to enjoy autonomy and increased control over their research. In addition to enhancing preservation efforts by reducing the handling of original materials, the project also provides informational and educational resources for students of all ages.

The Outcomes, Objectives, and Indicators for the *Florida Folklife Digitization and Education Project* were as follows:

Outcome 1: Students and lifelong learners will have increased awareness and knowledge of the resources available in the Florida Folklife Collection.

Objective: Automated indexes will be developed for Series 1576, *Audio Recordings of Florida Folk Festival Performances and Other Folk Events*; and Series 1577, *Photographs and Slides of Folk Arts, Artisans, and Performers*, increasing user access to materials in the collection.

Indicators:

- a. Database created, giving item-level access to much of the Folklife Collection.
- b. Series 1576 and 1577 were indexed and added to the Folklife Database, as well as 50 smaller Folklife series in the collection.

Objective: Four educational units related to Florida folklife will be developed and added to the Florida Memory Project Web site.

Indicators:

- a. Five Folklife educational units were completed and added to the Florida Memory Project Web site.
- b. Presentation given to the Florida Folklife Council (composed of folklorists and educators).
- c. Approximately 500 Folklife CDs sent to public and academic libraries.

Objective: The *Florida Folklife Digitization and Education Project* will be promoted and made available to a wide audience.

Indicators:

- a. Over 300 letters detailing the State Archives of Florida's *Florida Folklife Digitization and Education Project* were mailed out to various folklife and historical organizations.
- b. Promotional Folklife postcards were created, and over 11,000 were distributed at various meetings and conferences.
- c. Two promotional CDs were created, and over 8,000 were passed out at conferences, meetings, and in response to individual requests.

- d. All components of the *Florida Folklife Digitization and Education Project* were posted on the Florida Memory Project Web site, and made available to researchers worldwide.
- e. Staff worked to increase Google rankings. Rankings as of September 27, 2005:

Seminole Dolls	1 of about 92,500
Florida Folklife	6 of about 130,000
Netmaking	5 of about 11,900
Florida folk music	13 of about 3,190,000
Zora Neale Hurston	21 of about 663,000
Folklife	41 of about 1,930,000

Outcome 2: Students and lifelong learners will have remote access to selected digitized materials from the Florida Folklife Collection.

Objective: Ten thousand photographic images will be cataloged, digitized, and made available online as part of the Florida Photographic Collection.

Indicators:

- a. Over 10,000 Folklife images have been digitized, cataloged, and added to the Florida Photographic Collection on the Florida Memory Project Web site.

Objective: Selected audio recordings, images, and documents will be digitized and incorporated into the educational units being developed.

Indicators:

- a. Staff consulted with Peggy Bulger, Director of Library of Congress' American Folklife Center, and Michael Taft, Head of Folk Culture, regarding standards and guidelines used by the Library of Congress in digitizing sound recordings. Mr. Taft also provided recommendations on how to safely deal with "sticky shed syndrome," which affected some of the reel-to-reel tapes.
- b. The five Folklife learning units include a "Documents and Audio" and "Photo" section, featuring digitized documents, sound clips, and photographs from the Folklife Collection. All are available on the Florida Memory Project Web site.

A final measure used in evaluating the project's success was the "Customer Satisfaction Survey," which the State Archives of Florida implemented in July 1998 as a requirement of Performance Based Budgeting for the Florida Legislature. The survey is given quarterly to the users of the Archives' resources, and is based on the following measurement categories:

1. Tangibles - addresses the discrepancy between customer's expectations and management's perceptions of the expectations.
2. Reliability - addresses the discrepancy between management's perceptions of customer's expectations and service-quality specifications.
3. Responsiveness - addresses the discrepancy between service-quality specifications and actual service.
4. Assurance - addresses the discrepancy between the information expected to receive and the actual information received.

5. Empathy - addresses the discrepancy between service delivery and what is communicated to customers about it.
6. Relevancy - addresses the discrepancy between the information expected to receive and the actual information received.
7. Timeliness - addresses the discrepancy between the time services are to be rendered and the actual time services are rendered.

Though the survey proved *not* to be a good tool for evaluating the success of this specific project (the questions were too general), it did provide important feedback regarding the Archives online resources and staff response to inquiries, with over 95 percent of the respondents rating services “good” or “excellent.” (Attachment)

AWARDS

In April 2005, the State Library and Archives' *Florida Folklife Digitization and Education Project* won the Southeastern Library Network ***Outstanding Library Award for Preservation and Electronic Records***. The award is given to those programs that demonstrate an outstanding commitment to providing access to collections through innovative preservation initiatives; collections care programs; or implementation of best practices in the creation, access, and management of electronic information. The award was presented at the annual SOLINET meeting in Atlanta.

Also in April 2005, the Florida Memory Project won the Society of Florida Archivists' ***Award of Excellence***, which recognizes outstanding contributions to the preservation of the documentary heritage in Florida. The Florida Memory Project Web site features over 450,000 digitized records and is one of the most significant online resources created and managed by a single Archives organization in Florida.

CONCLUSION

Overall, the *Florida Folklife Digitization and Education Project* has been a tremendous success for the State Library and Archives of Florida and patrons alike. The Florida Folklife Collection, which came to the State Archives unorganized and difficult to use, has now become one of the best described and most readily accessible collections housed in the Archives. In addition to the written descriptions, there are digitized photographs, biographies, sounds, and educational units, all of which are housed within an innovative and attractive Web page devoted solely to the collection. Not only does this project enhance the use and knowledge of the Folklife Collection, but it serves as an example for marketing and educational opportunities that the Archives will emulate with other collections. From music CDs to an enlarged Web presence, to a more prominent role in the Florida historical, library, and educational communities, this project has changed how the general public, as well as staff, see the State Archives and its role in Florida life. We hope that the conclusion of the *Florida Folklife Digitization and Education Project* will

only serve as a beginning to more projects like this one that seek to bring Florida's past and culture to more people.